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I know an idea is something real... when it's like a song that you can't get out of your head. —*Shonda Rhimes*

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CHAPTER RECAP

Ideas can and should come from anywhere. As you move through the world, learn to become more aware. Whether they come from conversations you overhear or in the news that you read, learn to start sourcing the seeds of an idea everywhere.

How do you know if an idea is well-suited for a TV series? Shonda recommends asking yourself whether the idea has an ending. If you can easily picture your story, or your character's journey, coming to a conclusion, then your idea might be better suited for film. If your idea sparks hundreds more, it could be the basis for a healthy, long-lasting TV show. For example, Shonda says she could literally see hundreds of episodes of television for the show *Scandal* when she learned more about Judy Smith's job as a Washington D.C.-based fixer. Similarly, Shonda knew that at the very least, she could write seven seasons of *Grey's Anatomy* because surgical residencies typically last seven years.

Consider outside forces when assessing your idea. Where does your idea land when you consider it against the current cultural climate? How does your idea compare to what's already on television and what network executives might be looking for in their development schedules? You don't necessarily need to change your idea when you consider these factors, but it's always good to be aware of them.

TAKE IT FURTHER

- ▶ Know your industry. Subscribe to or follow a TV industry trade publication or website to learn what shows are being picked up, who's behind them, and what trends are happening right now in television production. Become familiar with the major networks, production companies, and the players behind them.

SUBCHAPTERS

- ▶ Your Ideas Should Come From Everywhere
- ▶ Have a Place to Keep Your Ideas
- ▶ TV Ideas Don't Have Endings
- ▶ Good Ideas Are Sticky
- ▶ Ensure Your Idea Is Original
- ▶ Consider Your Idea in the Real World
- ▶ Know What the Marketplace Is Looking For

NOTES

03 FINDING AN IDEA

ASSIGNMENT

- ▶ Put yourself in idea-mode. Over the next week, commit yourself to identifying ten ideas that you believe could be great for a TV series. Eavesdrop on conversations, read obituaries, or pull inspiration from your immediate environment. Record these ideas down in a notebook or on your phone as they come to you.
- ▶ Once you have your ten ideas, whittle them down to one or two that you will continue to develop and work over the course of this MasterClass. Which ones get you excited and stick in your mind the most? Which ones are the most original? If you want some feedback on your ideas, share them with your MasterClass classmates in [The Hub](#).

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